

Name: _____



New York State Testing Program

2019

**English Language Arts Test
Session 1**

Grade 6

April 2–4, 2019

RELEASED QUESTIONS

Session 1



TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some suggestions to help you do your best:

- Be sure to read all the directions carefully.
- Most questions will make sense only when you **read the whole passage**. You may read the passage more than once to answer a question. When a question includes a quotation from a passage, be sure to keep in mind what you learned from reading the whole passage. You may need to review **both** the quotation and the passage in order to answer the question correctly.
- Read each question carefully and think about the answer before making your choice.

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 7.

Excerpt from *Addison Cooke and the Treasure of the Incas*

by Jonathan W. Stokes

- 1 Aunt Delia dropped Addison and Molly off in front of the New York Museum of Archaeology. It was a sprawling marble building, backlit by lightning strikes in the glowering night sky. Trees bent under the lash of a whipping wind. Addison and Molly dashed through the heavy raindrops of the growing storm, splashing their way through puddles to the basement entrance.
- 2 Aunt Delia and Uncle Nigel were museum curators,¹ so Addison and Molly knew the wooded grounds by heart. They cut through a maze of hedges and ducked under an arched portico. Skimming rainwater from his face, Addison found the basement key hidden in a crack of loose mortar. He unlocked the creaking iron door and hauled it open with all his strength. He and Molly slipped inside from the howling rainstorm, the great door booming shut behind them.
- 3 The New York Museum of Archaeology was Addison's favorite place in the world. Great echoing halls filled with Egyptian mummies, Mongolian battle armor, a Viking warship, and the eastern wing of an Aztec temple. Deep down in the musty, snaking passageways of the basement archives was a secret underground world the public never saw. A labyrinth of vaults where millions of specimens were filed and stored. This was their uncle's workplace.
- 4 Addison and Molly trotted through the dark corridors by feel, listening to the rising thunder rattling the cement walls above. They passed a long hallway crammed with crates of Ice Age bones for the Hall of Paleontology: saber-toothed tiger skulls with teeth curved like Arabian sickle swords, giant sloth femurs heavy as tree limbs, dire wolf claws sharp as switchblades. At last they spotted a light glowing from an office at the end of a dark passage.
- 5 "Uncle Nigel, we're here!" Molly called. . . .

GO ON

- 6 “Your aunt has a lot to worry about right now,” explained Uncle Nigel. “People don’t visit museums as often as they used to. So your aunt and I have to work incessantly,² like Slinkies on an escalator. If we don’t find a great exhibit that will draw visitors back to the museum, our funding will be slashed and . . .” Uncle Nigel trailed off. Then, looking hard at Addison and Molly, he seemed to decide that honesty was the best policy. “Well, we could lose our jobs.”
- 7 Addison and Molly weren’t sure how to respond. Molly busied herself picking bits of turf from her cleats. Addison drew in his notebook, sketching the Cherokee headdress he saw draped over the filing cabinet.
- 8 “The point is,” continued Uncle Nigel, “your aunt is on a short fuse. And you’d be wise to be model children for her until we sail through this rough patch.” . . .
- 9 “Well, that’s enough serious talk,” said Uncle Nigel. “I just returned from a dig in the jungles of Bolivia and found the most improbable relic. An artifact that’s not even supposed to exist! I don’t suppose you’d like to see it?”
- 10 “I don’t see why not,” said Addison, who could think of nothing better than a strange relic from a distant country.
- 11 As Uncle Nigel talked, Addison’s eyes darted to the shadowy corners of the office, containing relics from every era of history. Ancient maps, papyrus scrolls, and decaying mummies. Blood-encrusted samurai swords from feudal Japan. Maasai spears decorated in ostrich feathers. The fossil skeleton of an extinct dodo bird. Even the ten foot tusk of a narwhal, spiraled like a unicorn’s horn. . . .
- 12 Uncle Nigel nodded and wound up his tale. “The Incas never delivered their treasure. Instead, they locked it away in a secret chamber and hid three keys across the Incan Empire. Each key contains a clue leading to the next. Locals believe Atahualpa’s treasure is cursed . . . Fortune hunters have searched for it over the centuries, and none have returned alive. Legends say the treasure vault will open only for someone who has learned from King Atahualpa’s mistakes.” . . .
- 13 “So what did you find on your dig in Bolivia?” Addison asked quietly.
- 14 “Oh, only this,” replied Uncle Nigel, unlocking the safe behind his desk and removing a fragile wooden box. He pried open the mildewed lid and tilted it to the light.
- 15 Addison’s jaw dropped in amazement. Molly’s followed suit. Inside the box lay an intricately carved stone, roughly the size of a large chess piece.

- 16 “One of the three keys!” cried Addison.
- 17 More thunder broke outside the museum. It shook the walls, as if giants upstairs were rearranging their furniture, and repeatedly changing their minds on where to set the couch. The wind howled so fiercely it could be heard even in the basement.
- 18 Molly shivered. “Is it real?”
- 19 Uncle Nigel allowed himself a smile. “I’m pretty sure it is Atahualpa’s first key,” he replied, his precise Oxford accent elegantly slicing the words into perfect squares. “Though the key is made of stone, so we can’t carbon-date it.”

¹**curator:** a person who chooses items for use in a museum

²**incessantly:** without stopping

GO ON

1

Which important idea is developed in paragraph 6?

- A** Uncle Nigel has been at the museum a long time.
- B** Uncle Nigel is afraid he may lose his job.
- C** Uncle Nigel has a plan to attract visitors to the museum.
- D** Uncle Nigel is hoping to start a new job soon.

2

What does the phrase “on a short fuse” mean as used in paragraph 8?

- A** hard to please
- B** hard to find
- C** easy to upset
- D** easy to frighten

3

How does paragraph 9 contribute to the structure of the story?

- A** It changes the setting of the story.
- B** It establishes the conflict in the story.
- C** It states the theme of the story.
- D** It foreshadows events in the story.

4 How does the language in paragraph 12 contribute to the overall tone of the story?

- A** It introduces a threatening tone.
- B** It highlights the sorrowful tone.
- C** It stresses the mysterious tone.
- D** It creates a worried tone.

5 What do paragraphs 10 and 13 indicate about Addison?

- A** He is uncertain whether his uncle's story is true.
- B** He is curious to see what his uncle has found.
- C** He knows that his uncle's discovery will save the museum.
- D** He wishes he had gone with his uncle on the dig.

6 Which sentence from the story signals a turning point?

- A** "Addison and Molly weren't sure how to respond." (paragraph 7)
- B** "I just returned from a dig in the jungles of Bolivia and found the most improbable relic." (paragraph 9)
- C** "Instead, they locked it away in a secret chamber and hid three keys across the Incan Empire." (paragraph 12)
- D** "The wind howled so fiercely it could be heard even in the basement." (paragraph 17)

GO ON

7

Which quotation is **most** important to include in a summary of the story?

- A “. . . Addison and Molly knew the wooded grounds by heart.” (paragraph 2)
- B “ ‘Uncle Nigel, we’re here!’ Molly called.” (paragraph 5)
- C “As Uncle Nigel talked, Addison’s eyes darted to the shadowy corners of the office . . .” (paragraph 11)
- D “I’m pretty sure it is Atahualpa’s first key.” (paragraph 19)

Directions
Read this article. Then answer questions 8 through 14.

Finding Sacagawea

by Eileen Charbonneau

- 1 Were we related? I had to find out.
- 2 I grew up in a house without books. Our family owned only an encyclopedia and a well-used dictionary. The only other books we had were those we borrowed from the library.
- 3 The day I was able to write the seventeen letters of my name and receive my library card was one I can remember as if it were yesterday, right down to the big desk that smelled of paper and paste and ink. I was so afraid that I'd made a mistake and would be banished from this wondrous place where the books lived. But I succeeded. The card was mine. My life as a reader had begun!
- 4 When I was ten, I found a book at the library about celebrated women. The book said that the American woman with the most statues in her honor was a Shoshone Indian named Sacagawea. She had been an interpreter on Lewis and Clark's great voyage from 1804 to 1806, joining them in the spring of 1805.
- 5 President Jefferson had hired Lewis and Clark and their band of adventurers to map and explore the United States, including the vast new territory just acquired from France in the Louisiana Purchase. Sacagawea was the only woman to go with them. She made the perilous journey across half our continent with her baby on her back. The presence of a mother and child was a sign that the expedition was a peaceful one and helped keep it safe from Indian attack.
- 6 Sacagawea provided a woman's laughter, strength, and endurance on the journey. During a boat mishap, she remained calm and saved instruments and documents from floating down the Missouri River. Lewis and Clark needed Shoshone horses and guidance over the Rocky Mountains, so Sacagawea's help translating was crucial to the expedition's success.
- 7 When I discovered that Sacagawea and I had the same last name—Charbonneau—I jumped up from my place at my father's feet and announced my discovery to him.

GO ON

- 8 My father put down his newspaper. Yes, he knew about the woman and her brave trek across the territory that was to become part of the United States. Yes, this woman had been married to a French Canadian named Charbonneau. Daddy's father was also a French Canadian. I asked if we could possibly be related.
- 9 My father said he didn't know, but he'd wondered himself if we had a common ancestor.
- 10 From that day on, it became our project. We used the resources of the Library of Congress, which began its collection with President Jefferson's books. We explored tiny libraries on American Indian reservations. We visited libraries in Canada, France, and Ireland, and we also entered the ever-expanding web of cyberspace. In search of our family, we made friends with the world.
- 11 After hours spent in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., poring over passenger lists of great ocean liners, I recognized the name of a girl from Ireland. I knew she had seen the Statue of Liberty for the first time on her nineteenth birthday in 1894. She had traveled across the Atlantic with one suitcase and the dream of a better life. Like Sacagawea, she was to marry a man named Charbonneau. "Dad!" I yelled. "Look! It's grandma!"
- 12 My father and I located family members galore on our search. One ran an ice-cream stand in the beautiful Laurentian Mountains of Quebec, Canada. Three brothers changed their name to Cole before traveling south to fight in the American Civil War. Two centuries before them, another set of Charbonneau brothers had been traders with the Indians of the American West. One of these brothers fathered our line. The other's descendants led to the fur trader Toussaint, husband of Sacagawea, always facing west in her statues.
- 13 So now we know how we're related. We're cousins of the Shoshone woman with the baby on her back who explored America by canoe, horseback, and on foot to map it for the first time. Her baby, Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau, also called Pomp, was educated by Captain William Clark and became a guide, too. He traveled through Europe as the guest of a prince and could understand five languages. Once he helped the United States govern an Indian mission in California, but lost his position for being "too fair" to the Indians. I think I would have liked that cousin.
- 14 Now I'm a storyteller. I travel through the past to find stories for my own books. In search of stories I spend lots of time in libraries, for that's still where the books live. In books and in life, the words of a Lakota Indian saying ring true for me: Mitakuye oysain, "We are all related."

8 In paragraph 4, what does the phrase “woman with the most statues in her honor” show about Sacagawea?

- A** that she was a charming person
- B** that she had been fearless
- C** that she is a famous person
- D** that she died long ago

9 How is the author’s pride in her ability to read introduced in the article?

- A** through a story from her childhood
- B** by contrasting her family with other families
- C** through examples of the books she finished
- D** by comparing herself with other readers

10 How do the details about Sacagawea in paragraphs 5 and 6 contribute to the development of the article?

- A** by helping readers see the difficulties in Sacagawea’s life
- B** by explaining the mystery surrounding Sacagawea’s life
- C** by creating curiosity for readers about where Sacagawea traveled
- D** by describing how Sacagawea played an important role in history

GO ON

11

Which is the **best** definition of “crucial” as it is used in paragraph 6?

- A heroic
- B fantastic
- C important
- D urgent

12

Based on the article, the author’s relationship to Sacagawea is developed through

- A a comparison of the author’s life to that of Sacagawea
- B explanations that show how the author is similar to Sacagawea
- C examples of the research that the author did on the life of Sacagawea
- D a chronological sequence of events that explained Sacagawea’s life to the author

13

Read this sentence from paragraph 13.

We’re cousins of the Shoshone woman with the baby on her back who explored America by canoe, horseback, and on foot to map it for the first time.

What does this sentence suggest about Sacagawea?

- A how long she participated in the expedition
- B how remarkable her accomplishment was
- C how familiar she was with the areas being explored
- D how she felt about her leadership abilities

GO ON

Which sentence **best** expresses a central idea of the article?

- A “Our family owned only an encyclopedia and a well-used dictionary.”
(paragraph 2)
- B “The presence of a mother and child was a sign that the expedition was a peaceful one and helped keep it safe from Indian attack.” (paragraph 5)
- C “My father said he didn’t know, but he’d wondered himself if we had a common ancestor.” (paragraph 9)
- D “We explored tiny libraries on American Indian reservations.”
(paragraph 10)

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 29 through 35.

Excerpt from *School Days in Egypt*

by Joyce Haynes

1 In Ancient Egypt, only the very smartest children went to school, where they learned to read and write. Most Egyptians did not ever learn to read and write.

2 The children who went to school learned to be scribes. Scribes were very important people in Ancient Egypt because they were almost the only ones who could read and write. Although records tell us that there were a few female scribes, most were men. Boys entered scribal school when they were quite young and studied hard for about 10 to 12 years.

3 It took years to learn how to write the hundreds of signs called *hieroglyphs*. Ancient Egyptians used hieroglyphs to write their language. Just think, you only have to learn 26 letters!



A photograph of an ancient Egyptian language.

4 Scribes also had to know how to write *hieratic*. This was a kind of shorthand script used for everyday writing.

5 Students memorized the hieroglyphic signs and practiced writing them on pieces of stone, pottery, or wood. They practiced by copying all kinds of things that had already been written: letters, literature, religious records, and business and government documents. In this way, students learned about more than just their language.

6 Scribal students used writing tools somewhat like the parts of a water color set you might have. Ink was shaped into round disks, just like our paint sets. But instead of many colors, scribes used only red and black. The cakes of ink were made out of the mineral red ochre and out of black carbon from burnt sticks or pans. Scribes carried small pots of water to mix with the inks. Their brushes, made of reed plants, were held in a small case. The hieroglyph that spells “scribe” contains all of these different parts.

GO ON

- 7 Students often practiced writing on flat pieces of the limestone rock that could be found everywhere in Egypt. Many school texts, or homework, have been found on these flakes of stone. Sometimes a student or a scribe needed to write something very important. Then he wrote on papyrus paper, made from the papyrus plant that grew in the marshes along the Nile.
- 8 When a student finished scribe school, he could get a good job in Ancient Egypt. He might become a doctor or a priest, the secretary to a noble family, the boss of a group of workers, or have some other job that required the ability to read and write.
- 9 The Egyptians wrote as many different kinds of things as we do. They wrote letters home and sent bills for work they'd done. They wrote poetry and stories and put down words of wisdom and advice for their children. They wrote many prayers to their gods.
- 10 Parents were happy to pay the high price to send a child to scribal school. Read these words, from a father to his son. They were written about 4,000 years ago, to convince the son of the advantages of going to school.

I will make you love writing more than your mother.
I will present its beauties to you.
Now it is greater than any trade.
There is nothing like it in the land.

I have seen the metal worker at his labor...
At the opening of his furnace,
With fingers like claws of a crocodile.
He stinks more than a fish.

The gardener carries a yoke.
He works himself to death.

I'll speak of the fisherman also...
He labors on the river,
Mingling with the crocodiles.

So if you know writing, it will go better for you.
Than any other profession I've told you about.

A day in the school room is excellent for you.
It is for eternity, its works are (like) stone.

29

What do paragraphs 5 through 7 show about the author's purpose for writing the article?

- A** The author wants to convince readers that school was the only way to advance in Ancient Egypt.
- B** The author wants to describe to readers what school was like for students in Ancient Egypt.
- C** The author wants to explain to readers why students had to write on limestone in Ancient Egypt.
- D** The author wants to entertain readers with interesting stories about life in Ancient Egypt.

30

How does the author develop ideas in paragraph 6?

- A** by explaining why Ancient Egyptian brushes had to be made out of reed plants
- B** by describing the process of making Ancient Egyptian ink from beginning to end
- C** by presenting the problem that Ancient Egyptian ink came only in red and black and offering a solution
- D** by comparing and contrasting Ancient Egyptian writing tools to art tools that are familiar to modern readers

31

What does the information in paragraph 8 illustrate about becoming a scribe?

- A** It can lead to a successful future.
- B** It gives the opportunity to write on papyrus paper.
- C** It requires memorization of hundreds of signs.
- D** It means leaving home at a young age to attend school.

GO ON

32

Which quotation **best** expresses a central idea of the article?

- A “Scribes were very important people in Ancient Egypt because they were almost the only ones who could read and write.” (paragraph 2)
- B “Although records tell us that there were a few female scribes, most were men.” (paragraph 2)
- C “Scribal students used writing tools somewhat like the parts of a water color set you might have.” (paragraph 6)
- D “They wrote letters home and sent bills for work they’d done.” (paragraph 9)

33

Which quotation from the article is **best** supported by the photograph?

- A “This was a kind of shorthand script used for everyday writing.” (paragraph 4)
- B “Students memorized the hieroglyphic signs and practiced writing them on pieces of stone, pottery, or wood.” (paragraph 5)
- C “They wrote poetry and stories and put down words of wisdom and advice for their children.” (paragraph 9)
- D “Parents were happy to pay the high price to send a child to scribal school.” (paragraph 10)

34

In the father’s letter, the phrase “Mingling with the crocodiles” suggests

- A the low pay of some types of work
- B the foolishness of avoiding work
- C the presence of danger in other jobs
- D the need to try hard in any job

GO ON

35

Which sentence would be **most** important to include in a summary of the article?

- A** Egyptians used hieratic for everyday writing.
- B** Students made ink from red and black disks.
- C** Scribes wrote important things on papyrus.
- D** Children studied for years to become scribes.

STOP

Name: _____



New York State Testing Program

2019 English Language Arts Test Session 2

Grade 6

April 2–4, 2019

RELEASED QUESTIONS

Session 2



TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some suggestions to help you do your best:

- Be sure to read all the directions carefully.
- Most questions will make sense only when you **read the whole passage**. You may read the passage more than once to answer a question. When a question includes a quotation from a passage, be sure to keep in mind what you learned from reading the whole passage. You may need to review **both** the quotation and the passage in order to answer the question correctly.
- Read each question carefully and think about the answer before writing your response.
- In writing your responses, be sure to
 - clearly organize your writing and express what you have learned;
 - accurately and completely answer the questions being asked;
 - support your responses with examples or details from the text; and
 - write in complete sentences using correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.
- For the last question in this test book, you may plan your writing on the Planning Page provided, but do NOT write your final answer on this Planning Page. Writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer on the lined response pages provided.

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 36 through 38.

Top Spot

by Scott Elder

- 1 A stealthy¹ predator glides along a river in South America, the top half of its head peeking out of the water's surface. Noticing a group of alligator-like animals called caimans floating by the shore, the hunter silently cruises toward the reptiles. It swims between plants to mask its movements and pauses beside an unsuspecting caiman. Then the animal shoots through the water at its target, sinking its teeth into the reptile's scaly skin.
- 2 With its prey clamped between its jaws, the creature climbs from the water and onto the riverbank. In doing so, it reveals its true identity. The dripping-wet hunter is a jaguar.
- 3 "We knew jaguars were good swimmers," says wildlife ecologist Alan Rabinowitz, who runs a big cat conservation organization called Pantera and witnessed the splashy smackdown while on an expedition. "But we were astonished to learn that they can hunt as they swim."
- 4 Snagging prey while swimming is something that no other feline does. Then again, the jaguar is full of unique features that make the animal stand out from the rest of the cat crowd.

On the Hunt

- 5 One thing that makes a jaguar unique from other cats is its hunting techniques. This cat hunts for food on the ground, in trees and while swimming in water. No other cat does this. "Even lions and tigers—the closest relatives of the jaguar—don't go after prey in all three spots," Rabinowitz says. "They usually just nab prey on the ground."
- 6 What's more, jaguars use a different hunting strategy from most other felines. A lot of cats chase targets over long distances. A jaguar silently sneaks up to prey such as tapirs before ambushing its meal. The animal creeps closer to its mark than even the tiger, another sneaky cat that gets about 20 feet from prey before pouncing.
- 7 When jaguars finally strike, they do so in their own special way. Most felines struggle with prey before overpowering it. But a jaguar has the largest jaws of any big

GO ON

cat, so its bite is so strong it's often able to take down its target with just one chomp. "Jaguars don't mess around," Rabinowitz says. "They're extremely efficient hunters."

- 8 But just because jaguars slay it with their hunting skills doesn't mean they like to fight. They only scuffle when necessary.

Bon Voyage

- 9 The cat's habits—its ability to swim and climb, its avoidance of conflict, and its stealth—have contributed to another unique jaguar feature: its traveling skills.
- 10 When these felines become independent from their moms at around age two, they go on a solo road trip, trekking up to 150 miles in search of new territory. (The jaguar's range stretches from northern Mexico to the country of Argentina.)
- 11 Using their swimming skills, they can cross bodies of water that would act as an obstacle to most other cats. And their sneaky nature and reluctance to fight allow them to pass through many dangerous areas without being noticed. Because of their one-of-a-kind characteristics, jaguars can travel longer distances than other cats looking for new home turf.

Adaptation Nation

- 12 So why is the jaguar so different from other felines? Over their four-million-year existence, jaguars have developed adaptations to help deal with unique challenges in their habitats. For instance, it's hard to chase prey through the forests where the cats live. That's why they creep right up to their target.
- 13 Deadly parasites thrive in the cat's habitat. If the jaguar is wounded, it would become exposed to infection. Um, no thank you! "Avoiding face-offs means that the jaguar is less likely to get a cut that could become infected," Rabinowitz says. That also may be why the cat developed its jumbo-size jaws, which allow it to quickly knock out prey. A swift take-down means less opportunity for infection-causing cuts.
- 14 The jaguar's adaptations help it survive. But they also show how living things are shaped by their habitat. "We change our environment," Rabinowitz says. "But our environment also changes us." And scientists aren't done learning about the relationship between the jaguar and its home. "We're still figuring out everything. And we can't wait to uncover more jaguar secrets."

¹**stealthy:** quiet and sneaky

THE JAGUAR RANGE IN THE AMERICAS



GO ON

36

How does the phrase “stand out from the rest of the cat crowd” in paragraph 4 contribute to the meaning of the article? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

37

What is a central idea of paragraphs 5 through 8 of “Top Spot”? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

38

How does paragraph 3 connect to paragraph 14 in the article “Top Spot”? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

Directions

Read this story. Then answer question 39.

Excerpt from *Under the Persimmon Tree*

by Suzanne Fisher Staples

Northern Afghanistan, October 2001

1 Nur grumbles, and the quilt rustles as he turns over. But Mada-jan does what she always does when we try to ignore her: she yanks the quilt up from the bottom and tickles his bare feet with a piece of straw. The quilt makes a popping sound as Nur kicks out. But Mada-jan is quick to get out of the way—despite her belly, which is enormous with my unborn brother. I am sure it’s a brother because my mother has been well and happy throughout her pregnancy. I have named my unborn brother Habib, which means “beloved friend.” I know Habib will be my friend, unlike Nur, who teases me mercilessly.

2 Before Nur goes out the door, he picks up the nearly empty water tin and flicks a few drops into my face. It’s icy and chases away any thought I might have of sleeping a few minutes longer.

3 “If the rooster is up, so must the hen be up,” he says, and his hand sloshes again in the water.

4 “Nur, stop playing!” Mada-jan says. “Najmah, get up!” She tugs at my quilt again. “After you fetch firewood you must feed this bukri,” she says, motioning to the brand-new baby goat that stands on quivering, sticklike legs near the head of the cot where I sleep. She was born yesterday, and her mother won’t feed her.

5 I hold out my hand to the kid, who nuzzles the underside of my fingers, butting my palm with her nose. Then I throw back the quilt and reach for my shawl. The autumn morning air is chilly, and I savor the cool, knowing how hot it will be before noon.

6 “Baba-jan is already milking the goats, and when he gets back he’ll want his breakfast,” says Mada-jan, folding my quilt so that I can’t change my mind and crawl back under its warmth. At the thought of the milk my father will bring, my stomach grumbles.

7 Outside, Nur finds the pole and ties the ghee tins¹ to either end of it with goat sinew. He hoists it to his shoulder and waits for me to walk with him to where the path leads

GO ON

down the hill to Baba Darya, the little stream at the bottom. Baba means “old man” as well as “father.” We call it “Old Man River” because its thin ribbons twist together like the wisps of an elder’s beard.

8 “I saw a leopard’s pug marks in the dust here last night,” Nur says, just as we reach the fork in the path that will take me to the woodpile and Nur to the Baba Darya. I hesitate where the two paths split.

9 “Nur!” Mada-jan says, her voice low with warning. Knowing Nur very well, she has stepped outside the door to listen. “Stop trying to scare her! Najmah, you know there are no leopards here. Now hurry, you two!” Still I hesitate.

10 “Really!” Nur whispers. “They were this big!” He holds his fist up so I can see it in the creeping light of the sunrise. “It must be a very large leopard.” Then he turns his back and walks, humming, down the hill toward the Baba Darya, the tins bouncing from the ends of the pole across his shoulder.

11 My heart hammers, and I want to run back to the house, but I know Mada-jan will be angry. I turn and run as fast as I can, all the way to the woodpile. There I spread my shawl on the ground and pile several armloads of wood on top. I feel a tingling along my spine the whole time. I think I see yellow eyes gleaming in the dark to the side of the woodpile. I’m sure I hear a low growl.

12 “Nur was only teasing,” I mutter under my breath. “Nur was only teasing.” But I really am convinced a large animal with long, pointed teeth is waiting to pounce on me. I am terribly afraid of leopards, although I have never seen one in my life. Mada-jan reminds me of this every time I complain that Nur has told me he’s heard one roar. When the shawl holds as much wood as I can carry, I bind up its corners into a knot and heft the bundle onto my head, then hurry back up the path under the heavy load.

13 Usually Mada-jan fetches the wood, leaving me to make naan² inside our mud-brick house, because she knows I’m afraid. But Habib, who will arrive in just a few days, keeps her off-balance when she walks along the steep, narrow paths. My father worries that she’ll tumble down to the bottom of the hill, and so he has asked me to put aside my fear to help my mother. I feel proud that I can do it, even though I am afraid.

14 I sit outside the curtained front doorway and make a small pyramid of kindling inside the mud oven. Mada-jan brings out the basket that holds the pads of dough she’s made and skewers each piece on a hook that she suspends through a hole in the top of the oven. The goat kid butts insistently at my shoulder, wanting to nurse. A few minutes later I hear Nur huffing under the weight of the water as he climbs the last few feet from the Baba Darya.

- 15 And only a moment later Baba-jan comes whistling down the path that leads from the pens that hold our sheep and goats at the base of the foothills of the Hindu Kush. He carries a large pail of milk.

¹**ghee tins:** containers

²**naan:** a type of bread

GO ON

39

Why does the narrator say her “heart hammers” in paragraph 11 of “Excerpt from *Under the Persimmon Tree*”? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 40 through 42.

Excerpt from *Minuk: Ashes in the Pathway*

by Kirkpatrick Hill

Yup'ik Eskimo Village, 1890

- 1 In other years, the first thing Panruk and I did after we got back to the village from spring camp was to get our dolls out and repair their clothes. But Panruk and I were so excited about the missionaries that we'd almost forgotten about our dolls.
- 2 So after we told Mamma and Grandma and the aunts about our visit with the Hoffs, we took our dolls out of the little fish-skin bags where they'd spent the fall and the winter. We were so happy to see them again. They were like little, dear friends we'd not seen for a long time. Even Mamma and Grandma and the aunts came out into the spring sun to touch our dolls and look at their clothes, as if they'd missed them, too. I thought that sometimes it must be hard to be grown-up and not able to play.
- 3 Our grandfather had carved both of our dolls from driftwood. Mine had tiny lines for tattoos on the chin and little black eyes and a straight mouth. I loved her serious little face. You could tell she was a good woman.
- 4 We weren't allowed to play with our dolls in the winter. But in the spring, after the geese had returned, we could. People believed that if girls played with their dolls before spring came, the weather would see and would punish them. Then winter would come again before spring had even begun.
- 5 We took our responsibility for the weather very seriously.
- 6 Our dolls not only had lovely faces, they had wonderful clothes. Mamma and the aunts had helped us sew tiny boots and mittens and caribou pants and beautiful little parkas. The year before I had made a qaspeq, a parka cover, for my doll from a little bit of red calico cloth. I was very proud of that qaspeq. Panruk could sew much better than I, and she'd made a little fish-skin parka for her doll. I wasn't good enough to sew fish skin yet, which was so delicate that it tore easily. But sometimes Panruk let me put her fish-skin parka on my doll, and I let her use my qaspeq for her doll.

GO ON

- 7 Because Maklak was a boy, he couldn't play with dolls, but he liked to sit near us and play with the little sled and dogs that our uncle had carved for him. Sometimes we pretended that his dog team was taking our little women to a big festival in another village, and Maklak was the driver.
- 8 Grandma had made us tiny dishes of clay and little vole-skin blankets and rabbit-fur robes, and Panruk and I had made small grass mats for our dolls' houses. Everything we had for our dolls was so little and perfect, their world became real to us. It was so real that while we played, we almost forgot about the village around us.
- 9 In our village there were five women's houses and one men's house. A women's house was called an ena. Each house was built partly underground. The houses looked like beaver houses, with the wood framework covered with grass and then sod.
- 10 A small, low passageway led into our house, and it was in that passageway that we cooked. One short step up led to the big room, which was higher so that the cold couldn't come into it from the passageway. In summer, we used another entrance on the side of the house. There was a firepit in the middle of the big room, and above the firepit was the seal-gut window I had told Mrs. Hoff about. We pulled it aside to let the smoke out when we lit a fire to heat the big room.
- 11 We had a seal-oil lamp made of clay. When we needed light, we set fire to a piece of oil-soaked moss in the lamp.
- 12 Our house was not very big because there weren't too many of us. Uliggaq's house had ten women and children and Cakayak's house had fifteen, so both their houses were bigger than ours.
- 13 The men's house was called the qasgiq. It was much bigger than the women's houses. It had to be big, because it held all the village men, and it was where the men would stay when people came from other villages. Sometimes everyone from two villages—men and women and children—crowded into the men's house for festivals and ceremonies. There were three tiers of wide benches all around the inside of the men's house.
- 14 We were very proud of our men's house, because it was the biggest one along the whole Kuskokwim River, and it had the widest benches. The benches were so old, they had been cut with a stone ax. They had been brought long ago, before even Grandpa was born, from a men's house along the Yukon River. Our men had defeated that village in a war, so they brought the benches home to remember their victory. Our men danced that story at every big festival in the men's house, and their war cries at the end of the dance were so fierce and terrible that all of us children hid our faces.

- 15 Each man had his own place in the house, according to his age. The oldest men were nearest the door, and the youngest often slept under the benches.
- 16 There was a wooden floor in the qasgiq, even over the firepit. When the men wanted a fire, they took the boards off, but when there was a dance in the men's house, they put the floorboards back. Our feet made a good drumming sound on the wooden floor over the firepit.

GO ON

40

In “Excerpt from *Minuk: Ashes in the Pathway*,” what is the narrator’s point of view about the life of an adult in her culture? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

41

How does paragraph 14 of “Excerpt from *Minuk: Ashes in the Pathway*” contribute to the story? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

GO ON

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Planning Page

You may PLAN your writing for question 42 here if you wish, but do NOT write your final answer on this page. Writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer on Pages 19 and 20.



GO ON

42

Adult characters in “Excerpt from *Under the Persimmon Tree*” and “Excerpt from *Minuk: Ashes in the Pathway*” are an important part of these stories. How do these adult characters contribute to the plot of each story? What are the differences in the ways the adult characters contribute to the plots? Use details from **both** stories to support your response.

In your response, be sure to

- describe how the adults in “Excerpt from *Under the Persimmon Tree*” contribute to the plot of that story
- describe how the adults in “Excerpt from *Minuk: Ashes in the Pathway*” contribute to the plot of that story
- describe the differences in the ways the adult characters contribute to the plots in each story
- use details from **both** stories to support your response

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